International Migration Outlook 2021

Facts & figures

COVID-19 has led to a record drop in migration flows

Permanent migration to OECD countries dropped by over 30% in 2020, to about 3.7 million – the lowest level since 2003.

Despite a massive drop, asylum seeking remained at high levels

New asylum applications fell by 31% in 2020; the sharpest drop since the end of the Balkan crisis in the early 1990s. However, the number remained above any year before 2014 except 1992.

Migrant employment has bounced back

Women account for more than half of resident migrants in most countries

Migrants are concentrated in urban areas

Migrants contribute more in taxes than they receive in benefits, health & education

Revenue

Direct taxes & social contributions

Indirect taxes e.g. VAT

Other (incl. general public services & defence)

Employer social contributions

Education

Health

Old age

Expenditure

Other (excl. general public services & defence)

Other social protection

2.5 trillion USD*

2.0 trillion USD*

*Total across 25 OECD countries, 2017

Source: National household and labour force surveys

Source: Eurostat, UNHCR

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